

Evolving and growing together is key to a thriving OOH industry

By [Lizelle Mc Connell](#), issued by [Tractor Outdoor](#)

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Iconic South African brands Simba and KFC recently launched a campaign that saw the snack food company team up with the fast-food chain to produce a new flavour of chips inspired by KFC's popular Zinger Wings - a collaboration that delighted long-time fans, who were thrilled to see two of their favourite snacks join forces in an exciting love affair.

However unexpected, the Simba-KFC campaign was still not the most unusual of brand partnerships, as the two are not direct competitors. One striking example that really caught global audiences by surprise was an unlikely allyship between McDonald's and Burger King – fast-food rivals since the beginning of time.

In September 2019, McDonald's Argentina ran a campaign where for one day, all proceeds from its Big Mac sales would be donated to a child cancer charity. In response, Burger King Argentina announced that it would stop all sales of its famous Whopper burger that same day, in a generous gesture to support McDonald's cause.

For me, what these two examples demonstrate (and there are many others!) is how much the marketing industry has grown up. Rewind to several years ago, and you were highly unlikely to see this kind of support between two brands vying for space in the hearts and minds of consumers. We've learned that the success of one doesn't have to come at that of another – and in fact, when working together and supporting one another, we can all win.



Lizelle Mc Connell, sales director at Tractor Outdoor

I am encouraged to see this same realisation awaken across the local out of home (OOH) sector, catalysed by the hardship of the pandemic, and we're seeing a new wave of initiatives and programmes aimed at increasing growth and knowledge-sharing across the broader industry.

When I first started in OOH, I had the privilege of working alongside some of the best in the industry, who took the time to invest in me, making a world of difference to me in my career.

This is what instilled in me the importance of mentorship and paying it forward. I have always been inspired by the entrepreneurial spirits of South Africans, and in 2020 I started working with several small, Black-owned OOH startups and entrepreneurs, many of whom were new to the industry, to help them get a foot in the door. I now regularly host free training and knowledge sessions that cover key areas, such as sales process, the decision-making funnel, account management tips and tricks, inventory reviews, rate card assistance, facilitated brainstorming and more, to share what I have learned throughout my career in OOH media sales.

I very soon realised the hurdles these newcomers face: access to information, tools, resources, and networks. If I could assist in some small way, it would potentially help them to grow their businesses significantly. These business owners are not short on passion, intelligence or drive, and are determined to make their mark in the industry. It is important that those of us who have been around a little longer band together and support other OOH startups, and not view competition as a threat to our businesses. We have a skills shortage in OOH, and if we can raise the bar in terms of our collective offering, we will all benefit from a growing, thriving, better-skilled, more diverse industry.

The Covid-19 pandemic hit the OOH media industry very hard, but more importantly, it showed us that working together is essential to both our success and our survival. To build a more sustainable industry, supporting one another is something we actively need to do. Let's connect with each other – together, we are stronger.

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